

Epidemiology & Environmental Health Keeping the Lines of Communication Open

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 April 5, 2006

Epidemiology ----- Environmental Health



Epidemiology & Environmental Health

Reactive – foodborne outbreak investigation

Preventative – shelters

“In between” – exclusions, restrictions

Working Together Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

- Notification
- Epi-EH (Environmental Health) discussion
- Initial investigation...shock
- Sample collection, documentation retrieval...denial
- Patient interviews

Working Together cont.

- Re-inspection, more documents, more questions...weary
- Epi statistics, lab results
- Final recommendations to establishment...acceptance?
- Media

Improving Epi-EH Communication in Food Establishment Outbreak Situations

- Cross-train
- Coordinate Epi needs with EH needs before visiting or contacting establishment
- Share concerns of establishment operator and concerns of the ill
- Document and share all actions taken and conversations held
- Allow the investigating EHS (Environmental Health Specialist) to meet with Epi at some point
- Present an outbreak summary to all epidemiologists and Environmental Health Specialists

Shelter Operations “Operation Dome”



“How in the world do we control disease?”



Epidemiologists & Environmental Health Specialists *Making it happen*

- Food/water supply and distribution
- Sanitation
- Hand washing
- Laundry & bedding
- Day care operations
- Barbershops

Between Sept.2 and Sept.12,
approx. 6,500 evacuees visited
the clinic. 1,169 (18%)
reported symptoms of acute
gastroenteritis. Of 44 stools
tested, 50% were positive for
Norovirus.

Control Measures to Prevent Spread of Disease

- Persons with acute gastroenteritis placed in isolation area for patients with suspected infectious illness.
- After diarrhea and vomiting ended, patients transferred to another isolation area for 48 hours.

An all out hand washing campaign was initiated. Signs were posted everywhere: living quarters, restrooms, dining tables, serving lines. Thousands of bottles of hand sanitizer were placed on cots, in restrooms, on dining tables, and on serving lines.



Help Us Keep You Healthy...

Keep Your "Sleeping Area" Clean



Do not store food in the area because:

- ✓ It will spoil and make you sick
- ✓ It will also attract bugs such as ants and roaches

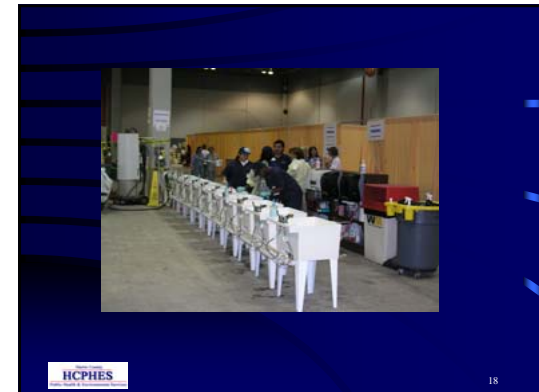
Notify housekeeping to clean up any spills or vomit

Pick up and throw away your trash

Throw away dirty diapers or blankets

Help Us Keep You Healthy...

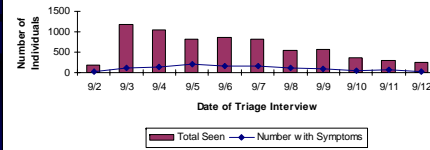
HCPHES





The number of acute gastroenteritis cases peaked on September 5, when 211 persons reported acute gastro-intestinal symptoms. Cases declined slowly after that.

Comparison of Trends Among Katrina Evacuees Seen In Triage Intake at Reliant Arena And The Subgroup With Documented Symptoms of Diarrhea And Vomiting In Houston, Texas, September 2005



We dodged the bullet thanks to the concerted efforts and diligence of medical, epidemiological, and environmental staff from many agencies !

In Summary

Frequent communication and mutual understanding and respect between epidemiologists and Environmental Health Specialists plays a significant role in identifying and reducing causal factors behind communicable disease - we're in this together!